



## **Selections**

- 1. Time Travels (8:19)
  Senior Master Sqt. Robert Thurston
- 2. Asimov's Aviary<sup>1</sup> (5:33) Joel Puckett
- 3. Dawn Flight<sup>2</sup> (8:21) Philip Wilby

#### The Planets

Gustav Holst

- 4. Mars, the Bringer of War<sup>3</sup> (8:16) arranged by Alfred Reed and Clark McAlister
- 5. Mercury, the Winged Messenger (4:40) arranged by Master Sgt. John Romano
- 6. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity<sup>4</sup> (8:11) arranged by Alfred Reed and Clark McAlister
- 7. Red Tail Skirmish<sup>5</sup> (4:50)
  Bruce Yurko
  Featuring The U.S. Air Force Band's Ceremonial Brass
  Maj. Scott Guidry, Conductor

- 8. Flight Movement I: A View from the Heavens<sup>6</sup> (6:20) Eric Ewazen
- Call of the Champions<sup>7</sup> (5:14)
   John Williams
   arranged by Technical Sgt. Kenneth F. Soper°
- 10. High Flight (4:18)
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- 11. Upon This Hill (4:33)
  Senior Master Sgt. Robert Thurston
  Featuring Natalie Morales, Narrator
- 12. Lord, Guard and Guide (Air Force Hymn) (3:46) Melody by Henry Baker Lyrics by Mary C.D. Hamilton arranged by Master Sgt. John Bliss
- 13. The U.S. Air Force Blue (2:32) arranged by Senior Master Sgt. (Ret.) Tom Dossett
- 14. The U.S. Air Force (:56)
  Robert MacArthur Crawford
  arranged by Senior Master Sgt. Robert Thurston

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#### "Time Travels" by Senior Master Sgt. Robert Thurston

"Time Travels" features the exquisite compositional talent of the Band's chief arranger Senior Master Sgt. Robert Thurston. In describing this work, he wrote,

"I composed 'Time Travels' to highlight the virtuosity of my brilliant musical colleagues in The United States Air Force Band. There is no underlying programmatic idea or structure; it is a free form caprice, moving almost improvisationally from one idea to the next, wherever my ears happened to lead me that day. As I was completing "Time Travels" in early September 2012. I was saddened to learn of the death of Dr. James Croft. one of my teachers and mentors at Florida State University, and a tremendous musical and personal influence. It was at Dr. Croft's urging that I auditioned as an arranger for The U.S. Air Force Band in 1993--a life altering decision that still reminds me of Jim Croft as someone who cared about his students long after they graduated, who instinctively understood their gifts, and who never stopped trying to help them find their place in the world. 'Time Travels' is gratefully dedicated to his memory."

"Time Travels" was premiered by The U.S. Air Force Concert Band under the baton of Col. Larry H. Lang at The Midwest Clinic in Chicago on Dec. 19, 2012.

#### "Asimov's Aviary" by Joel Puckett

"Asimov's Aviary" was commissioned by The U.S. Air Force Band and was premiered on Dec. 19, 2012, at The Midwest Clinic in Chicago. The title references Isaac Asimov (who created the Three Laws of Robotics and helped to define the concept of serious science fiction) and the Micro-Aviary at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Fairborn, Ohio. The Micro-Aviary is part of the Air Force Research Lab, whose mission is to design the next generation of undetectable robotic drones, which will take the form of tiny insects and birds.

Currently on the faculty of the Peabody Conservatory of Music of Johns Hopkins University, composer Joel Puckett remarked, "I frequently imagined Asimov dreaming of an aviary far in the future where robotic insects and birds were given life and flew around in constant electronic swarms. I also found myself thinking about the excitement that the researchers at the Micro-Aviary would feel if they were able to show their creations to Asimov, and how amazed he would have been to see how quickly his ideas have become a reality."

Puckett dedicated "Asimov's Aviary" to the men and women at the Air Force Research Lab at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

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#### "Dawn Flight" by Philip Wilby

"Dawn Flight" evokes British composer Philip Wilby's vision of the experience preparing for and achieving flight with airplanes from a bygone era. The opening measures depict the solemn calm of the morning and then the music further builds as the planes begin their trip.

"It is New Year's Day in Lealholme, situated in the North Yorkshire Moors National Park, England. It is early on a bright sunny morning, but there is a bite in the air and frost on the ground.

"In a field stand two 1918 Bi-planes. Into the stillness of the morning walk a small group of people. Suddenly, as the propellers are spun round and the machines roar into life, the aeroplanes climb into the matchless blue sky of the early morning.

"They soar and dive in exultant mock combat."

Wilby has written for many different instruments and ensembles, including piano, organ, voice and wind ensemble. However, he is best known for his contributions to the brass band repertoire. Wilby, a trained violinist, performed as a member of the Covent Garden Orchestra, as well as the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

As a composer, he garnered acclaim with his first brass band composition, "The New Jerusalem" (1990), written for the National Youth Brass Band. Wilby is adept at transcribing music of the brass band idiom to wind orchestra and brings an advanced harmonic language to his compositions.

#### "The Planets" by Gustav Holst

Mvt. 1 – "Mars, the Bringer of War" arranged by Alfred Reed and Clark McAlister

 $\mbox{Mvt.}~3$  – "Mercury, the Winged Messenger" arranged by Master Sgt. John Romano

Mvt. 4 – "Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity" arranged by Alfred Reed & Clark McAlister

"The Planets" remains one of the most impressive and widely enjoyed orchestral works ever written. Composed between 1914 and 1916, English composer Gustav Holst created his masterpiece after taking an interest in astrology several years prior. His intent was that each of the seven movements, distinct in character and thematic material, would express a mood suggested by the astrological sign associated with its particular planet. It debuted in London on Sept. 29, 1918, to much acclaim and was immediately embraced by audiences and critics alike.

The resounding success of "The Planets" also skyrocketed the reclusive Holst to a fame with which he was never comfortable. Though his later works proved less successful, "The Planets" remains a mainstay in orchestral literature. Thankfully, numerous transcriptions have made it accessible and popular among wind bands as well, and we're pleased to present these fine transcriptions by Alfred Reed and Clark McAlister, and our own Master Sat. John Romano.

"Mars, the Bringer of War" opens with an ominous, motor-like rhythmic figure. Its relentless pounding paints a cold portrait of war's destruction, a reality Holst reportedly hated. His good friend and conductor Sir Adrian Boult commented, "I well remember the composer's insistence on the stupidity of war as well as all its other horrors ... I feel the movement can easily be played so fast that it becomes too restless and energetic and loses some of its relentless, brutal, and stupid power." Though audiences often assumed Holst had intended "Mars" to portray the brutality of the first World War, sketches of the work were already complete prior to the war breaking out.

"Mercury, the Winged Messenger" is a quick-footed scherzo with the melody darting from instrument to instrument. Most notably, it features the celeste. Holst associated the character of the piece with the process of human thought, thus the construct of the movement as the melody flits from one part of the ensemble to the next.

"Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity" conveys the astrological significance of Jupiter as benevolent and generous. Though most of the movement is jovial and lively, the English tune introduced toward the middle is in large part responsible for its popularity. Reminiscent of a solemn carol, the melody was later arranged as the hymn tune "Thaxted," named after the village where Holst lived for many years. Adapted to fit Sir Cecil Spring-Rice's poem, "I Vow to Thee, My Country," the music was also used to help the English express their strong sense of patriotism in response to the human cost of World War I. In addition, the tune was incorporated in the hymn "O God beyond all praising." More recently, it has even been used as the theme of the Rugby Union World Cup since 1991.

#### "Red Tail Skirmish" by Bruce Yurko

Commissioned by The United States Air Force Band, "Red Tail Skirmish" was premiered by the Band's Ceremonial Brass in January 2012. It is dedicated to the Tuskegee Airmen who were the first African-American military aviators in the United States Armed Forces, serving in World War II in the Army Air Corps. Despite tremendous racial discrimination, these men, also known as "Red Tails" because of the unique crimson color displayed on the tail section of their aircraft, trained and flew with distinction and received the Congressional Gold Medal for valor and performance. Their bravery amongst such adversity has inspired generations of young Airmen.

Composed by New Jersey music educator and composer Bruce Yurko, "Red Tail Skirmish" honors the accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen through a musical tour-de-force that depicts the tension, thrill and excitement of an aerial dogfight. It is a highly challenging and fast-paced work for brass and percussion ensemble. The Band's Airmenmusicians proudly honor the Tuskegee Airmen with this commission and recording.

# "Flight" by Eric Ewazen Movement I: "A View from the Heavens"

Eric Ewazen is a renowned American composer who was born in 1954 and came to prominence in the 1990s. Possessing a unique compositional style, he sometimes evokes hints of other iconic American composers such as Aaron Copland and Paul Creston. A considerably versatile composer, Ewazen has written for orchestra, wind ensemble, chamber ensembles, voice and piano. In addition to composing, Ewazen also serves as a professor of Composition at The Juilliard School, a position he has held since 1980. His desire to teach was fueled in part by the excellent instruction he received from such influential teachers as Samuel Adler, Milton Babbitt, Gunther Schuller and Joseph Schwanter.

In 2001, under the command of then Maj. Larry H. Lang, the U.S. Air Force Heritage of America Band in Hampton, Va., commissioned Eric Ewazen to compose a work celebrating the 100th anniversary of powered flight. The result was a three-movement work simply titled, "Flight." It is a programmatic journey through the ever-changing skies and landscapes encountered while flying. The first movement, "A View from the Heavens," depicts the beauty and splendor of the earth unfolding below with its vast array of magical colors and gentle clouds floating over the land. The composer sets the stage for the subsequent storm that is to come, with a return to calm and peacefulness by the end of the work. Ewazen once stated that music is "a window of our times," and that it is a "... reflection of any given period of time." "Flight" celebrates not only the long, arduous journey towards powered flight, but also reflects the colorful and proud heritage of the United States Air Force.

#### "Call of the Champions" by John Williams, arranged by Technical Sgt. Kenneth F. Soper

"Call of the Champions" was composed by John Williams for the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. The piece begins with the chorus declaring, "Citius! Altius! Fortius!" (Faster! Higher! Stronger!) which is the motto of the modern Olympic games. This arrangement was created by Technical Sgt. Kenneth Soper, a French horn player with the United States Air Force Academy Band in Colorado Springs, Colo. Born Feb. 8, 1932, John Towner Williams Jr. is considered to be one of the greatest film composers of all time. In 1952, Williams was drafted into the United States Air Force. As part of his assignment, Williams conducted and arranged music for the Air Force Band in California.

Following his service, Williams studied at The Julliard School in New York and the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. Finally, he returned to the west coast to begin work as an orchestrator at film studios. In his long career, Williams has composed some of the most recognizable film scores in cinematic history, including the music for the "Star Wars" saga, "Superman," "Jaws," the "Indiana Jones" series, "ET the Extra-Terrestrial," "Saving Private Ryan," three "Harry Potter" films and "Lincoln." Williams has 5 Academy Awards, 4 Golden Globe awards and 21 Grammy awards to his credit. The United States Air Force is certainly proud to call him one of our own.

#### "High Flight" by Senior Master Sgt. Robert Thurston

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings.
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of: Wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long delirious burning blue,
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace,
Where never lark nor even eagle flew.
And while with silent, lifting mind, I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

Shortly before the United States entered World War II, a 19-year-old American named John Gillespie Magee Jr. joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and was sent to serve in England. He was killed when his Spitfire collided with another British plane during a training flight on Dec. 11, 1941.

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While serving in Europe, then Lieutenant Magee was so inspired one day that he wrote a sonnet on the back of a letter to his parents. His poem, "High Flight," celebrates not only the joy of flying, but the wondrous thrill of seeing creation from a whole new point of view. Magee's beautiful poem has become as much a part of the Air Force's heritage as "Off we go into the wild blue yonder...." It has also inspired many different musical settings.

Senior Master Sgt. Robert Thurston, the Air Force Band's chief arranger, captures the spirit of this poem in his original rendering of "High Flight." He wrote, "In creating this one, I have tried to describe, in sonic terms, that same grand, humbling, dizzying sense of joy and wonder Lieutenant Magee expressed so eloquently in verse. As I wrote, I was always mindful of the hallowed place these lines hold in Air Force culture."

#### "Upon This Hill" by Senior Master Sgt. Robert Thurston

On Oct. 14, 2006, President George W. Bush stood at the base of the Air Force Memorial, situated atop a hill overlooking the Pentagon and the hallowed grounds of Arlington National Cemetery. Beneath the soaring spires meant to evoke the famed Air Force Thunderbirds' "bomb-burst" maneuver, he dedicated this striking monument in honor of the servicemen and women of the United States Air Force and its predecessors.

President Bush said, "To all who have climbed sunward and chased the shouting wind, America stops to say: your service and your sacrifice will be remembered forever, and honored in this place by the citizens of a free and grateful nation."

In attendance that afternoon was Lolete Barlow, the widow of an Air Force officer who is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. During this dedication, she was inspired to write a poem aptly titled, "United States Air Force Memorial." On Sept. 13, 2013, the Concert Band showcased her poem with the premiere of an original composition by the Band's chief arranger, Senior Master Sgt. Robert Thurston. Commemorating the sacrifices of airmen past and present, "Upon This Hill" is a beautiful musical expression of the words penned seven years ago.

The U.S. Air Force Band is honored to feature Natalie Morales from NBC's TODAY show as she brings this selection to life with her reading of Mrs. Barlow's heartfelt text. As the daughter of retired Air Force Lt. Col. Mario Morales Jr., the Band is most thankful for her strong support of the military and this organization over the years. The collaboration between poet and composer supports the Band's ongoing mission of honoring those who have served and inspiring American citizens to heightened patriotism and service.

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#### "United States Air Force Memorial" by Lolete Barlow

They're not as tall, nor fleet of foot. Their hair no longer dark, has thinned Or disappeared perhaps, And yet the spark of who they were, These warriors of old, radiates from each of them, The skilled, the brave, the bold.

Long years ago when they were young
They flew through foreign skies
And fought for home and country,
For freedom and the lives
Of loved ones left behind.

These pilots, gunners, bombardiers, Ground support and engineers Fought valiantly a world away Defending what we have today Half a century later. From all the missions that were flown Too many never made it home. Instead they sleep 'neath foreign soil With fellow airmen—comrades all. None will be forgotten.

To all who wore the Air Force blue, To all the men and women who, Though gone before us, live on still In memory upon this hill. We gratefully salute you.

Now spires of stainless steel curve high And yonder pierce the wild blue sky, A hilltop tribute all can see A monument to victory And heroes who secured it.

GOD BLESS THEM ALL

### "Lord, Guard and Guide;" melody by Henry Baker and lyrics by Mary C.D. Hamilton, arranged by Master Sgt. John Bliss

Lord, guard and guide the ones who fly Through the great spaces of the sky; Be with them traversing the air In darkening storms or sunshine fair.

Thou who dost keep with tender might The balanced birds in all their flight, Thou of the tempered winds, be near, That, having thee, they know no fear. Control their minds with instinct fit What time, adventuring, they quit The firm security of land; Grant steadfast eye and skillful hand.

Aloft in solitudes of space, Uphold them with Thy saving grace. O God, protect the men who fly Thru lonely ways beneath the sky.

These are the lyrics of "Lord, Guard and Guide," also known as the "United States Air Force Hymn." The text is derived from a prayer by poet Mary C.D. Hamilton. She also used the same text in "A Hymn for Aviators," a musical setting by English composer C.H.H. Parry. Hamilton wrote her prayer in 1915 during World War I with the transcript first appearing in the "American Student Hymnal" of 1928 set to Mozart's "Dona Nobis Pacem." Years later during World War II, the initial verse of the prayer was adapted for use in "The Navy Hymn" as a tribute to naval aviators.

The melody heard on this recording was written by Henry Baker (1835-1910), an English civil engineer by profession, who considered himself to be a recreational musician. He served as editor-in-chief of the Anglican "Hymns Ancient and Modern" from 1860 to 1877, to which he contributed hymns, tunes and translations.

Since then, more than 60 million copies of this historic hymnal have been sold. Baker wrote this tune for his hymn, "Hesperus," also known as "Quebec," first published in "A Hymnal for Use in the English Church" and later found in the "Armed Forces Hymnal" of the 1950s. It was during this time that Hamilton's prayer and Baker's music were combined into a single entity and adopted by the Air Force, coming on the heels of its establishment as a separate service. This beautiful arrangement of "Lord, Guard and Guide" is from the pen of one of the Band's arrangers, Master Sgt. John Bliss.

### "The U.S. Air Force Blue" by Scott-Textor, band arrangment by Ben Ludlow, vocal arrangement by retired Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Tom Dossett

From its very inception, the Air Force has insisted on recruiting and retaining only the best and brightest for both its enlisted and officer corps. As a direct result, America enjoys the status as the world's greatest and most respected air power.

"The U.S. Air Force Blue" was written in the late 1950s as part of the ongoing recruiting effort, made more popular by a recording by Mitch Miller and his orchestra in 1957. Its popularity was such that it completely saturated the country. In fact, within a short amount of time, the tune was at the center of an effort to replace "The U.S. Air Force" as the official service song. Though unsuccessful, its popularity remains as it is still one of the most widely performed marches in the Air Force. This particular arrangement is the work of staff arranger, retired Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Tom Dossett.

# "The U.S. Air Force" by Robert MacArthur Crawford, arranged by Senior Master Sgt. Robert Thurston

Originally titled "Army Air Corps" before the Air Force became a separate service, "The U.S. Air Force" was written in 1938 as an entry in a competition to create an official song for the service. Maj. Gen. Oscar Westover, Chief of the Army Air Corps, expressed the need for a song to reflect the unique identity of the service, and helped initiate a composition contest. With help from his friend and colleague, "Liberty Magazine" editor Bernarr MacFadden, the contest promised \$1,000 to the winning composer. The only requirements for the song entries were that they have a simple harmonic structure, be within the limits of an untrained voice, and have a beat in "the march tempo of military pattern." More than 700 entries were received, including unsuccessful submissions from Meredith Willson and Irving Berlin.

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Robert MacArthur Crawford, a music instructor, aviation enthusiast and professional musician, submitted his winning composition two days before the deadline. Crawford, who originally titled the song "What Do You think of the Air Corps Now?" later became a pilot in the Army Air Corps, and publicly sang the song for the first time over national radio from the 1939 National Air Races. This recording of the first verse of the song is an arrangement by the Band's chief arranger, Senior Master Sgt. Robert Thurston.

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high into the sun;
Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,
At 'em boys, Give 'er the gun!
(Give 'er the gun!)
Down we dive, spouting our flame from under,
Off with one helluva roar!
We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey!
Nothing can stop the U.S. Air Force!



#### THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BAND

Commander and Conductor Col. Larry H. Lang - El Paso, Texas

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#### Soprano

Ано

Senior Master Sgt. Christine Adamick Germain - Newington, Conn. Master Sat. Anne Seaton Baker -

Lodi, Wis.
Technical Sgt. Mandi Harper\* -

Technical Sgt. Mandi F Columbus, Ohio

Chief Master Sgt. Angela L. Burns - Wilmington, N.C.
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#### Bass

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Master Sgt. Matthew Irish - *Dallas, Texas*Technical Sgt. Ben Park\* - *San* 

Technical Sgt. Ben Park\* - San Diego, Calif.

#### LEGEND

(Ret.) = Retired

\* = Principal or Section Leader

 $\wedge$  = Associate Principal

+ = Musical Advisor, Singing Sergeants

# = Member, Ceremonial Brass

% = Member, Air Force Strings

° = Member, U.S. Air Force Academy Band, Colorado

Academy Band, Colorade Springs

## **Credits**

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